

Klein, Kerstin

Article

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Behavioral effects of nonconscious mimicry and social intentions: A Reverse Engineered Pitch

Kerstin Klein^{a,1}

^a *University of Queensland, Australia*

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JEL code: M31

Abstract: Using the pitching research template elaborated by Faff (2017) as basis, this paper discusses the reverse engineering process on the article “Behavioural effects of nonconscious mimicry and social intentions” by Wong, Hartley and Tombs (2017). The main objective is to reflect on the reverse engineering exercise while including major findings of the paper itemized. This paper adds an additional angle on the reverse engineering process, the pitching research template and Robert Faff’s efforts in creating a comprehensive research base.

1. Introduction

The UQ Summer Research Programme is one of the many services provided by the UQ Student Employability Centre to help students along their way of completing their degrees at the University of Queensland. The focus of this specific programme lies on allowing non-research students to gather experiences in the field of research and encourage them consequently join a research programme or continue their studies either by joining an Honours, Master by research or PhD programme. In addition to allowing students to extend their knowledge in a number of research areas of their choice, the programme aids the development of communication and presentation skills and critical thinking. To support Robert Faff in his efforts of

¹ *Corresponding author:* 39 Blair Dr, St Lucia QLD 4067; tel. +61 7 3346 8100; email address: kerstin.klein@uq.edu.au

promoting and developing his research on “Pitching Research”, six summer scholars from a variety of backgrounds have been chosen by the UQ Student Employability Centre.

The author of this paper was one of those previously mentioned scholars. While various aspects of the summer programme have been completed in collaboration with other scholars, this paper was written individually to summarize the experience of individually preparing a reverse pitch in line with the pitching research template established by Faff (2017). For this reverse engineering exercise, a paper written by Wong *et al.* (2017) on behavioral effects of nonconscious mimicry and social intentions has been chosen. As part of the exercise various aspects of the pitching research including a reverse engineered pitching template, a 350-word abstract and a pitching presentation have been created. Throughout the process, one of the authors of the paper, Nicole Hartley, provided valuable feedback and ensured a positive outcome of the project.

After this short introduction about the paper, its purpose and content, the second chapter will discuss the reverse engineering process with a clear focus on the establishment of the template on the paper Behavioural effects of nonconscious mimicry and social intentions (Wong *et al.*, 2017) followed by a personal reflection by the author. Lastly, the conclusion will summarize all previous findings and evaluate the overall process of the project.

2. Brief commentary on the application of reverse engineering

As previously mentioned, one of the main goals of reverse engineering according to Faff (2017) is to complete an amended pitching research template for the analyzed paper. This Pitching Template completed by Kerstin Klein in close collaboration with one of the authors of the paper, Nicole Hartley, can be found in Table 1. The main aim of the paper was to analyze the effect of nonconscious mimicry in a direct customer interaction, therefore the following research question has been derived: “Does nonconscious mimicry take on a critical role in relationship building in customer service encounters or can the importance of individuals’ social intentions when entering into a social interaction in a customer service setting be neglected?”. By analyzing this question, the authors of the paper explore nonconscious mimicry, which is a salient behavior in many social interactions such as the imitation of accent over the phone or the tendency to return a smile from another smiling person. Past research in the field has not considered the importance of individuals’ social intentions when entering into a social interaction in a customer service setting, leaving a significant research gap for the paper created. During the reverse engineering process, Campbell *et al.* (1966), Kulesza *et al.* (2014) and Tanner *et al.* (2008) have been identified as key papers. All of these papers have helped to create a substantial background analysis for the research conducted, with Campbell *et al.*

(1966) being of special importance as it provided the base for the primary research conducted.

Wong *et al.* (2017) extends current managerial leadership theory into the novel setting of nonconscious mimicry to explain the critical role of social intentions in relationship building in customer service encounters. The paper hypothesizes that relationship-oriented individuals are likely to facilitate greater interactions with others, are more receptive to social cues, thus also more receptive to nonconscious mimicry and consequences. Conversely, task-oriented individuals aim for task accomplishment during third-party interactions and will overlook affiliative behaviors in the immediate environment. The study was conducted using one pre-test and one quantitative experiment to evaluate the hypothesized relationships. 121 participants have been recruited via the weekly staff e-newsletter and course announcements at a large Australian university to complete the previously described two stages of primary research. The data collected was ordered using a 3 (social intentions: relationship or task or none) \times 2 (nonconscious mimicry: present or absent) between-subjects factorial design. Participants were randomly assigned to one of six conditions during the process. As can be seen in Figure 1, a Mickey Mouse diagram characterizing the novelty of the research idea has been developed as part of the template. It shows that the three factors social intention, behavioral nonconscious mimicry and product choice behavior are closely interrelated. While prior research analyzed those aspects only broadly, this paper analyses the changing outcomes when looking into relationship- and task-oriented individuals.

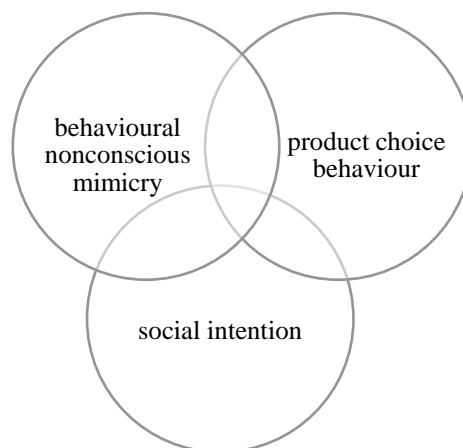


Figure 1. Mickey Mouse Diagram

The paper suggests that by applying the theory established, companies can improve their relationship marketing such as increasing the customer's liking of the service provider and improving product sales and consequently will be able to generate more financial profits. It has a number of valuable contributions including the discussion

of different key theoretical implications while filling the key gap by empirically addressing and investigating the impact of social intentions and nonconscious mimicry on product choice behavior and the importance of social intentions and its results. Furthermore, a framework summarizing and conceptualizing nonconscious mimicry has been developed. Additionally, an effective priming activity for social intentions that overcomes the shortcomings of extant manipulation activity has been introduced.

3. Personal reflections

By closely collaborating with Nicole Hartley, the reverse pitching exercise was probably the activity with the steepest learning curve during the UQ Summer research programme. I was able to apply my previously acquired knowledge about the pitching template while at the same time gaining highly valuable insights into the thought process during the development of a research proposal, methodology elaboration and completion of a research project. Furthermore, the process allowed me to deepen my understanding for the pitching template established by Faff (2015) and its importance within the research world.

As consumer behavior is one of the areas I have always been highly interested in exploring further I deliberately chose a paper within that research area. While the research and the methods used took some time to be understood completely, the process was an invaluable learning experience and helped to broaden my horizons within my field of studies. By discussing my pitching template with Nicole Hartley, amending it according to her feedback and presenting the final product to Robert Faff, I was able to continuously learn throughout the process, deepen my understanding of the topic and eventually explain the theories discussed to my fellow research scholars. This procedure has given me insights into the possibility of completing a PhD and consequently becoming a researcher and lecturer myself, an opportunity I enthusiastically will explore in the next months.

4. Conclusion

This research summary analyzed the development of a reverse pitch based on the paper Behavioural effects of nonconscious mimicry and social intentions written by Wong *et al.* (2017). Faff's (2015) pitching research template was used throughout the project and provided a framework and learning tool during the composition of this paper. Following the framework allowed me to follow a clear structure and analyze the paper efficiently without missing substantial parts of research. Creating a research template has helped to further understand the importance of frameworks such as the pitching template while at the same time providing me with insights into consumer behavior and one of its practical implications.

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Table 1. Completed 2-page pitch template on “Behavioural effects of nonconscious mimicry and social intentions”

Pitcher's Name	Kerstin Klein	FoR category	Consumer Behaviour	Date Completed	3/12/2017
(A) Full Reference	Wong, S.-H., Hartley, N., & Tombs, A. (2017). Behavioural effects of nonconscious mimicry and social intentions. <i>Australasian Marketing Journal</i> , 25, 26-37.				
(B) Basic Research Question	Does nonconscious mimicry take on a critical role in relationship building in customer service encounters, or can the importance of individuals' social intentions when entering into a social interaction in a customer service setting be neglected?				
(C) Key Papers	<p>Kulesza, W., Szypowska, Z., Jarman, M.S., Dolinski, D., 2014. Attractive chameleons sell: the mimicry-attractiveness link. <i>Psychol. Mark.</i> 31 (7), 549-561.</p> <p>Campbell, D.T., Stanley, J.C., Gage, N.L., 1966. Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research. McNally, Michigan.</p> <p>Tanner, R.J., Ferraro, R., Chartrand, T.L., Bettman, J.R., van Baaren, R.B., 2008b. Of chameleons and consumption: the impact of mimicry on choice and preferences. <i>J. Consum. Res.</i> 34 (6), 754-767.</p>				
(D) Motivation / Puzzle	Nonconscious mimicry is a salient behaviour in many social interactions such as the imitation of accent over the phone or the tendency to return a smile from another smiling person. Past research in the field has not considered the importance of individuals' social intentions when entering into a social interaction in a customer service setting, leaving a significant research gap for the paper created. This paper extends current managerial leadership theory into the novel setting of nonconscious mimicry to explain the critical role of social intentions in relationship building in customer service encounters.				
THREE	Three core aspects of any empirical research project i.e. the “DioTs” guide				
(E) Idea?	This paper hypothesizes that relationship-oriented individuals are likely to facilitate greater interactions with others, are more receptive to social cues, thus also more receptive to nonconscious mimicry and consequences. Conversely, task-oriented individuals aim for task accomplishment during third-party interactions and will overlook affiliative behaviors in the immediate environment. The study was conducted using one pre-test and one quantitative experiment to evaluate the hypothesized relationships.				
(F) Data?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experiment following methodology of using a photo-description task to conduct the mimicry manipulation and product taste task to evaluate product choice behavior 2. 121 participants recruited through the weekly staff e-newsletter and course announcements at a large Australian university 3. – 				

Pitcher's Name	Kerstin Klein	FoR category	Consumer Behaviour	Date Completed	3/12/2017
	<p>4. Data based on own survey conducted with help of research assistant and research grant by the University of Queensland – generation of new data</p> <p>5. No</p> <p>6. Yes</p> <p>7. no participant was suspicious regarding the manipulation nor correctly guessed the research hypotheses. Harman's single factor test revealed that common method bias does not account for the following findings. Assumptions for using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) and regression were assessed and were not violated.</p>				
(G) Tools?	A 3 (social intentions: relationship or task or none) \times 2 (nonconscious mimicry: present or absent) between-subjects factorial design was used. Participants were randomly assigned to one of six conditions.				
TWO	Two key questions				
(H) What's New?	Built on existing literature and primary research, this paper suggests that the three factors social intention, behavioural nonconscious mimicry and product choice behavior are closely interrelated. While prior research analyzed those aspects only broadly, this paper analyses the changing outcomes when looking into relationship- and task-oriented individuals.				
(I) So What?	By applying the theory established, companies can improve their relationship marketing such as increasing the customer's liking of the service provider and improving product sales and consequently will be able to generate more financial profits.				
ONE	One bottom line				
(J) Contribution?	This paper discussed different key theoretical implications including filling the key gap by empirically addressing and investigating the impact of social intentions and nonconscious mimicry on product choice behavior and the importance of social intentions and its results. Furthermore, a framework summarizing and conceptualizing nonconscious mimicry has been developed. Additionally, an effective priming activity for social intentions that overcomes the shortcomings of extant manipulation activity has been introduced.				
(K) 3 Key Findings	<p>1. Nonconscious mimicry may be insufficient on its own to have a substantive impact on the receiver</p> <p>2. The effects on nonconscious mimicry disappear when people are task-oriented</p> <p>3. Social intentions significantly moderate the relationship of nonconscious mimicry on product consumption and purchase intentions through interpersonal liking which however is not reflected for product liking.</p>				